Claudio Pastro

Our images today come from the work of Claudio Pastro, a renowned Brazilian sacred artist, iconographer and illustrator.

Starting in 1975, Pastro devoted himself to sacred art, having studied art theory and techniques at Abbaye Notre Dame de Tournay (France), at the Sacred Art Museum of Catalonia (Spain), at the Lorenzo de Viterbo Academy of Fine Arts in Italy, at the Benedictine Abbey of Tepeyac, Mexico, and at the Lyceum of Arts and Crafts in São Paulo. He made paintings, stained glass, tiles, altars, crosses, sacred vessels and sculptures for presbyteries, chapels, churches, monasteries and cathedrals, not only in Brazil, but also in Argentina, Belgium, Italy, Germany and Portugal. He also illustrated books, such as *The Dialogues of Saint Gregory the Great* (Germany), *The Life of Saint Anthony* (Italy), and a book of Christmas carols for children. He taught courses in Aesthetics and Sacred Art in seminars, theological schools, monasteries, museums and colleges.

He was responsible for the renovation of the Cathedral of Uberlândia, Minas Gerais, with a painting of the central panel, an eschatological piece from the book of Revelation. Among the artist's most recent works are the monument in honor of Our Lady of Aparecida in the Vatican Gardens and the commemorative medal for the 300th anniversary of the meeting of the image of Our Lady of Aparecida.

He died in the early hours of October 19, 2016, at the age of 68, after suffering a stroke. His funeral and burial took place at the Nossa Senhora da Paz Monastery, in Itapecerica da Serra, in the state of São Paulo.

I chose Claudio Pastro for our meditations on the Good Shepherd today for a variety of reasons. First, his surname *Pastro*, likely originating in the Veneto area of Italy, is an old variant of the word *pastor*, or “shepherd”. It was hard to resist. Second, his style manages to employ great simplicity without ever looking unfinished or deskilled. One might say that he is one of the few artists I know whose paintings can simultaneously look like illustrations of a children’s storybook as well as icons radiating refined theological statements of great depth. The simplicity also highlights his warm use of colour and the great sense of energy that brings the gospels to life. Everything in these pictures pulses with real life and light. I hope you enjoy the images as much as I always do.